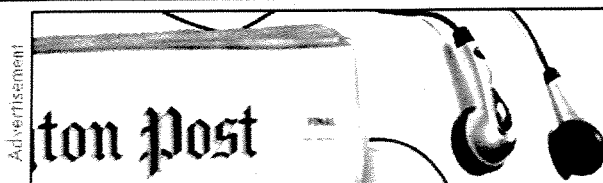


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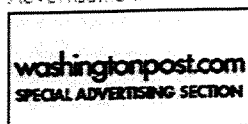
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A Mystery That Ends In Poetry

After 40 Years, A Tape of Pablo Neruda Is Finally Played Again

By Darragh Johnson
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, June 7, 2006; Page C01

The Pablo Neruda tape went missing sometime in the past 40 years, and no one even knew until 1999. That's when Felix Angel became "obsessed with lack of memory" -- and with finding a tape he wasn't even sure existed.

The great Chilean poet had given a reading in Washington in 1966, and Angel, curator of the Cultural Center at the Inter-American Development Bank, figured it must have been taped. He tracked down the historian and old friend of Neruda's who had introduced the poet.

But Leopoldo Castedo had just died of a heart attack.

Angel asked around at the IDB, where Neruda had been scheduled to give the reading, but no one could help. He quizzed IDB retirees and former employees. None of them knew a thing about the tape.

His search became, he says, "almost like 'The Da Vinci Code.' "

Last night, at the IDB auditorium, Neruda's voice rang loud and clear. Back at the bank where he was supposed to have

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Pablo Neruda in 1971 after winning the Nobel Prize. He died in 1973. (United Press International Photos)

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